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Labour Account Australia

The Australian Labour Account provides quarterly and annual time series data, consisting of four quadrants: Jobs, People, Hours and Payments

Reference period March 2021

Released 9/06/2021

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Key statistics

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021:

- Total jobs increased by 104,900 (0.7%).
- The number of people working multiple jobs increased by 4.6%.
- Secondary jobs increased by 56,100 (5.5%).
- Hours worked increased by 1.0%.
- Employed people increased by 0.7% to 13.2 million.

| | Seasonally Adjusted | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| | Dec qtr 2020 to Mar qtr 2021 % change | Mar qtr 2020 to Mar qtr 2021 % change |
| Total Jobs | 0.7 | -1.0 |
| Filled Jobs | 0.5 | -1.5 |
| Main Jobs | 0.1 | -2.1 |
| Secondary Jobs | 5.5 | 7.5 |
| Job Vacancies | 12.1 | 26.9 |
| Hours Actually Worked | 1.0 | -1.3 |
| Average Hours Actually Worked Per Job | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| Average Income Per Employed Person | 0.2 | 5.6 |

Data impacts and changes

Contribution of short-term non-residents and comparisons with the Labour Force Survey

The ABS Labour Force Survey (LFS), like labour force surveys across the world, is designed to provide information on the usually resident civilian population (aged 15 and over).

The Labour Account, introduced in 2017, is designed to complement the headline labour force statistics, by providing measures of all employed people, and all jobs, in the Australian economy. It accounts for the following groups that are not reflected in the LFS:

1. people who are not usually resident in Australia
2. Australian defence force personnel
3. people under the age of 15.

Australia is one of only four countries (along with the Netherlands, Denmark and Switzerland) with a Labour Account, which means there are more data available for Australia than most other countries to monitor COVID impacts and recovery.

Contribution of short-term non-residents

LFS data shows that employment had recovered in aggregate terms in the March quarter 2021 (compared to March quarter 2020), while employment hadn't fully recovered in the Labour Account (2.1% below March quarter 2020).

The difference in the extent of recovery observed between the LFS and Labour Account is explained by the contribution that short-term/temporary non-residents usually play within the economy. Over the COVID period, there have been large reductions in short-term non-

resident arrivals in Australia. While these reductions are not reflected in LFS employment estimates, they are reflected in Labour Account estimates (e.g. employment and jobs).

The difference between the LFS and Labour Account estimates will narrow if there are further increases in employment of usual residents in Australia and/or the number of short-term/temporary non-residents starts to increase.

Modelling the contribution of short-term non-residents in the Labour Account

A model-based approach is needed to estimate the contribution of short-term/temporary non-residents (including the number who were working, the jobs they held, and the hours they worked). Administrative data is used for estimates of defence force personnel and people under 15.

As noted in '[Assessing the impact of COVID-19 and data limitations on the Labour Account](#)' ([/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-account-australia/mar-2021#assessing-the-impact-of-covid-19-and-data-limitations-on-the-labour-account](#)) in this and previous Labour Account releases, there are inherent limitations in the ability of the model to estimate the labour market activity of short-term non-residents given available data sources.

Generally, any modelling uncertainty from these limitations is small. However, during such an unprecedented period, and with the large reductions in short-term non-resident arrivals in Australia, any modelling uncertainty for short-term non-residents is likely to be more visible than it would normally be. The ABS is continuing to regularly review its modelling of short-term non-residents, which may result in method enhancements and revisions in the future.

Public and private sector estimates during the COVID-19 period

The ABS added public and private sector estimates to the Labour Account with the release of data for the September quarter 2019 (in December 2019). The method used to disaggregate quarterly industry level jobs by public and private sector relies on annual jobs information at the end of the financial year, with quarterly changes in payments information used as a quarterly indicator for changes in jobs.

During COVID-19, some of these aggregate payments measures have reflected larger than usual quarter-to-quarter changes, which makes them less suitable as an indicator for changes in jobs.

Similar to trend series, public and private sector estimates have now been temporarily

suspended in the Labour Account release. The ABS is exploring enhancements to the sector methodology, including whether there are new data sources that may provide a better indication of quarterly change in jobs (such as payroll jobs data).

Revisions this quarter and upcoming revisions

Data in the four quadrants of the Labour Account, have been revised from the previously published estimates. This reflects revisions to quarterly source data, including revisions to data from the Labour Force Survey, revisions to Overseas Arrivals and Departures data, and revisions to data from the quarterly Australian National Accounts.

Revisions to published estimates can be found in Table 22 of this release.

Extraordinary Annual Seasonal Review (June quarter)

Commencing in the June quarter 2020 Australian Labour Account, the ABS changed the method used to produce seasonally adjusted estimates from the 'concurrent' method to the 'forward factors' method for the majority of the series.

Given the large impacts of the COVID-19 period on the labour market, and the continuing use of a forward factors approach to seasonal adjustment, the ABS will undertake an extensive annual review of seasonally adjusted series. This review may involve changes to time series treatments to ensure that the seasonal adjustment process continues to be less influenced by the large irregular movements over the past year. The results will be implemented with the June quarter 2021 release of the Labour Account, on 8 September 2021.

Trend series will continue to be temporarily suspended.

Australian System of National Accounts historical revisions (September quarter)

Statistical revisions are carried out regularly in the Australian System of National Accounts to reflect the most current information and estimation methods. Periodically the ABS will revise a longer annual time series, which is often referred to as "historical revisions". These longer time series revisions focus on improving data quality (e.g. incorporating cyclical data collections such as the Census); adopting new classifications; and improving international comparability. The next major historical revisions to National Accounts are scheduled to be published in the Australian System of National Accounts on 29 October 2021.

The historical revisions to the Australian System of National Accounts will result in revisions to the inputs to the compilation of the Labour Account. These revisions will be implemented with the release of data for September quarter 2021, on 8 December 2021.

Rewrites to hours worked (September quarter)

The ABS has reviewed the method used to compile the Labour Account hours worked series. A range of methodological and process improvements were identified, and these affect the compilation of the Labour Account for the Jobs, People and Hours quadrants. The changes and resulting revisions to data will be implemented with the historical revisions for September quarter 2021 release of the Labour Account, on 8 December 2021. An analytical article outlining both the revisions to hours worked and Australian System of National Accounts historical revisions will also be included in that release.

Upcoming changes to the naming convention of the time series spreadsheets

Based on feedback received from users, the ABS will change the naming convention for Labour Account time series spreadsheets, with the September quarter 2021 release, on 8 December 2021. Users may need to update their automated processes for downloading and reading the data. To assist users, a concordance table between the current and upcoming time series spreadsheet names is included in the data downloads section of this release.

Jobs

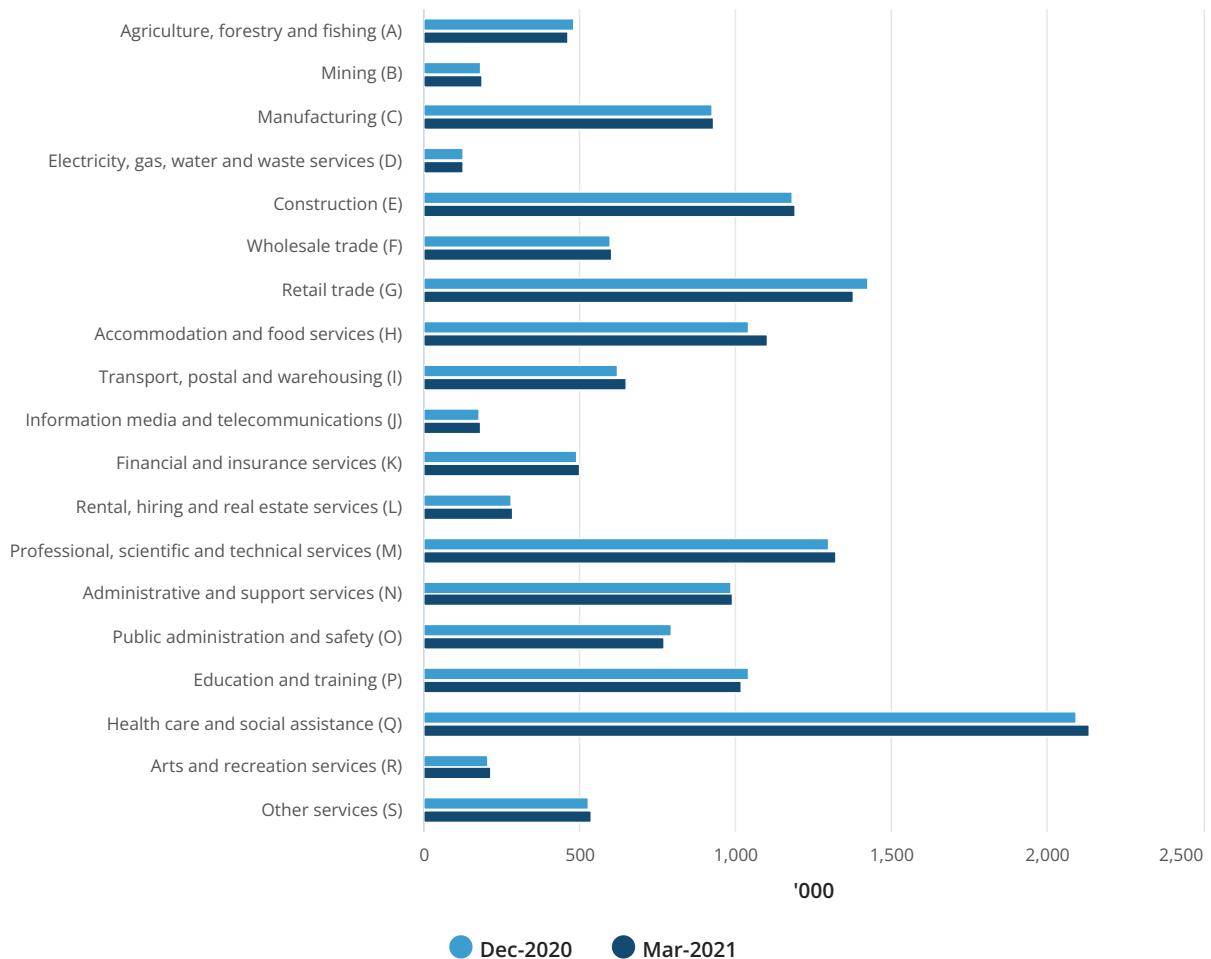
In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021:

- Filled jobs increased by 0.5%, following a 2.8% rise in the December quarter 2020. Filled jobs fell 1.5% through the year.
- The number of main jobs increased by 17,600 (or 0.1%).
- The number of multiple job holders increased by 4.6%.
- The proportion of vacant jobs increased to 2.0%, following the recent low of 1.0% in the June quarter 2020.

Total jobs

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021 the total number of jobs increased by 104,900 (or 0.7%), made up of an increase of 31,200 job vacancies and an increase of 73,700 filled jobs.

Total jobs, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted



Filled jobs

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021 the number of filled jobs increased by 73,700 to 14.3 million.

Filled jobs, Australia, seasonally adjusted



Filled jobs, proportion by industry, Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted

| | Filled Jobs Mar qtr 2021 ('000) | Proportion of Total All Industries Mar qtr 2021 (%) |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A) | 460.8 | 3.2 |
| Mining (B) | 180.7 | 1.3 |
| Manufacturing (C) | 912.7 | 6.4 |
| Electricity, gas, water and waste services (D) | 125.8 | 0.9 |
| Construction (E) | 1,165.9 | 8.2 |
| Wholesale trade (F) | 587.4 | 4.1 |
| Retail trade (G) | 1,351.1 | 9.5 |
| Accommodation and food services (H) | 1,078.9 | 7.5 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing (I) | 638.4 | 4.5 |
| Information media and telecommunications (J) | 178.0 | 1.2 |
| Financial and insurance services (K) | 483.6 | 3.4 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services (L) | 281.2 | 2.0 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services (M) | 1,290.7 | 9.0 |
| Administrative and support services (N) | 962.7 | 6.7 |
| Public administration and safety (O) | 754.7 | 5.3 |
| Education and training (P) | 1,010.7 | 7.1 |
| Health care and social assistance (Q) | 2,094.3 | 14.7 |
| Arts and recreation services (R) | 210.7 | 1.5 |
| Other services (S) | 524.5 | 3.7 |
| Total All Industries | 14,292.6 | 100.0 |

Filled jobs, percentage change by industry, Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted

| | Dec qtr 2020 to Mar qtr 2021 % change | Mar qtr 2020 to Mar qtr 2021 % change |
|---|---|---|
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A) | -3.4 | -1.7 |
| Mining (B) | 1.1 | -3.1 |
| Manufacturing (C) | 0.3 | -1.5 |
| Electricity, gas water and waste services (D) | 2.0 | 1.1 |
| Construction (E) | 0.2 | -6.1 |
| Wholesale trade (F) | 0.7 | -2.5 |
| Retail trade (G) | -3.6 | -3.2 |
| Accommodation and food services (H) | 5.7 | -2.4 |
| Transport, postal and warehousing (I) | 3.7 | -4.1 |
| Information media and telecommunications (J) | 1.3 | 0.3 |
| Financial and insurance services (K) | 1.8 | 0.9 |
| Rental, hiring and real estate services (L) | 2.5 | -4.2 |
| Professional, scientific and technical services (M) | 1.6 | 1.3 |
| Administrative and support services (N) | 0.2 | -0.6 |
| Public administration and safety (O) | -2.9 | -3.1 |
| Education and training (P) | -2.5 | -7.7 |
| Health care and social assistance (Q) | 1.9 | 7.1 |
| Arts and recreation services (R) | 4.2 | -1.2 |
| Other services (S) | 1.7 | -5.2 |
| Total All Industries | 0.5 | -1.5 |

Secondary jobs

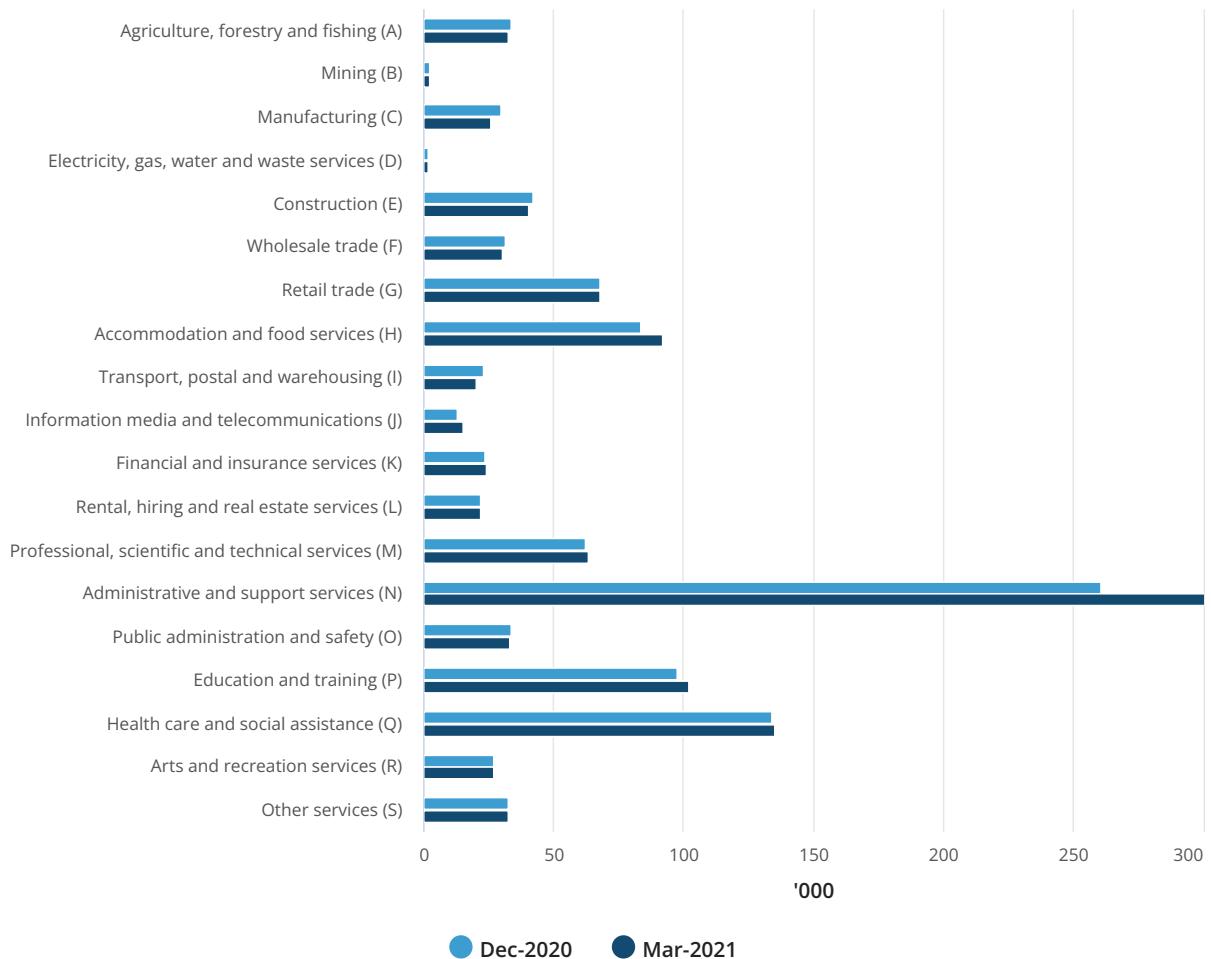
Secondary jobs are where a person is working more than one job at the same time, and may consist of one or more additional jobs. These jobs can be held by people who have their main job in the same or a different industry.

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021:

- Secondary jobs increased by 56,100 (or 5.5%).
- The proportion of secondary jobs to filled jobs was 7.5% compared to 7.2% in the previous quarter.

The three industries with the highest number of secondary jobs were Administrative and support services, Health care and social assistance and Education and training.

Secondary jobs, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted

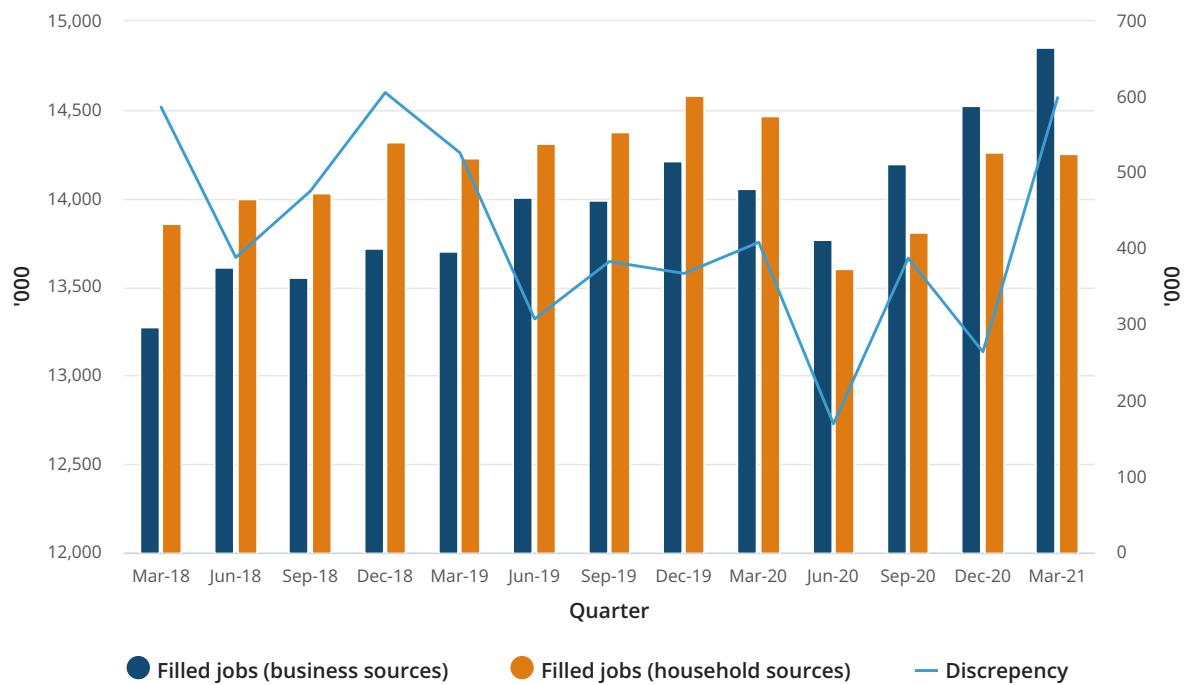


Statistical discrepancy - Filled jobs

The Labour Account compiles independent estimates of the number of filled jobs from both a household and business perspective. The difference between these two estimates is referred to as the "statistical discrepancy". This discrepancy is reduced to zero through the balancing processes of the Labour Account, through producing a single harmonised or "balanced" number of filled jobs for each industry and the total economy.

In original terms the discrepancy between household sources and business sources was 599,300 jobs, or 4.2% of the household estimate, in the March quarter 2021.

Filled jobs discrepancy, Mar qtr 2018 to Mar qtr 2021, original



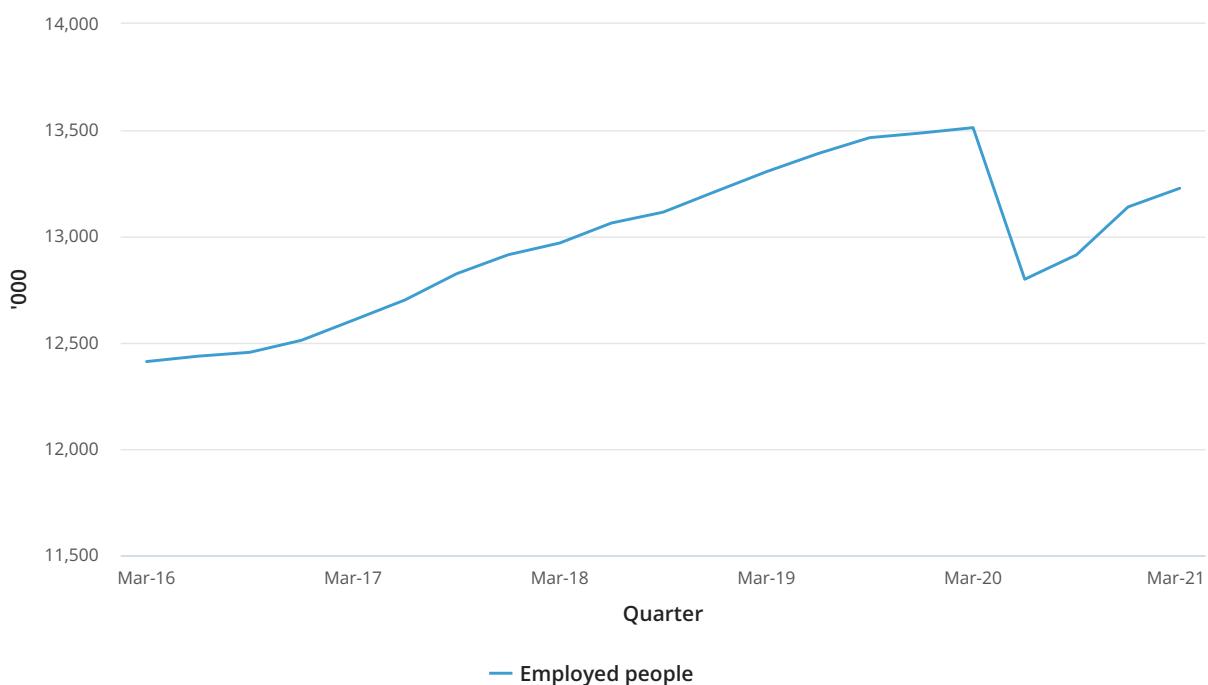
Balancing decisions for: Agriculture, forestry and fishing; Mining; Manufacturing; Electricity, gas, water and waste services; Construction; Wholesale trade; Retail trade; Accommodation and food services; Transport, postal and warehousing; Information media and telecommunications; Financial and insurance services; Professional, scientific and technical services; Administrative and support services; Public administration and safety; Education and training; Health care and social assistance; and Arts and recreation services, were mostly based on business survey sources. Balancing decisions for Rental, hiring and real estate services, and Other services, were mostly based on household survey sources.

People

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021:

- The total number of employed people increased by 0.7% to 13.2 million.
- There were 765,600 unemployed people, a decrease of 147,200 people from December quarter 2020.
- There were 1,151,700 underemployed people, a decrease of 132,400 people from December quarter 2020.

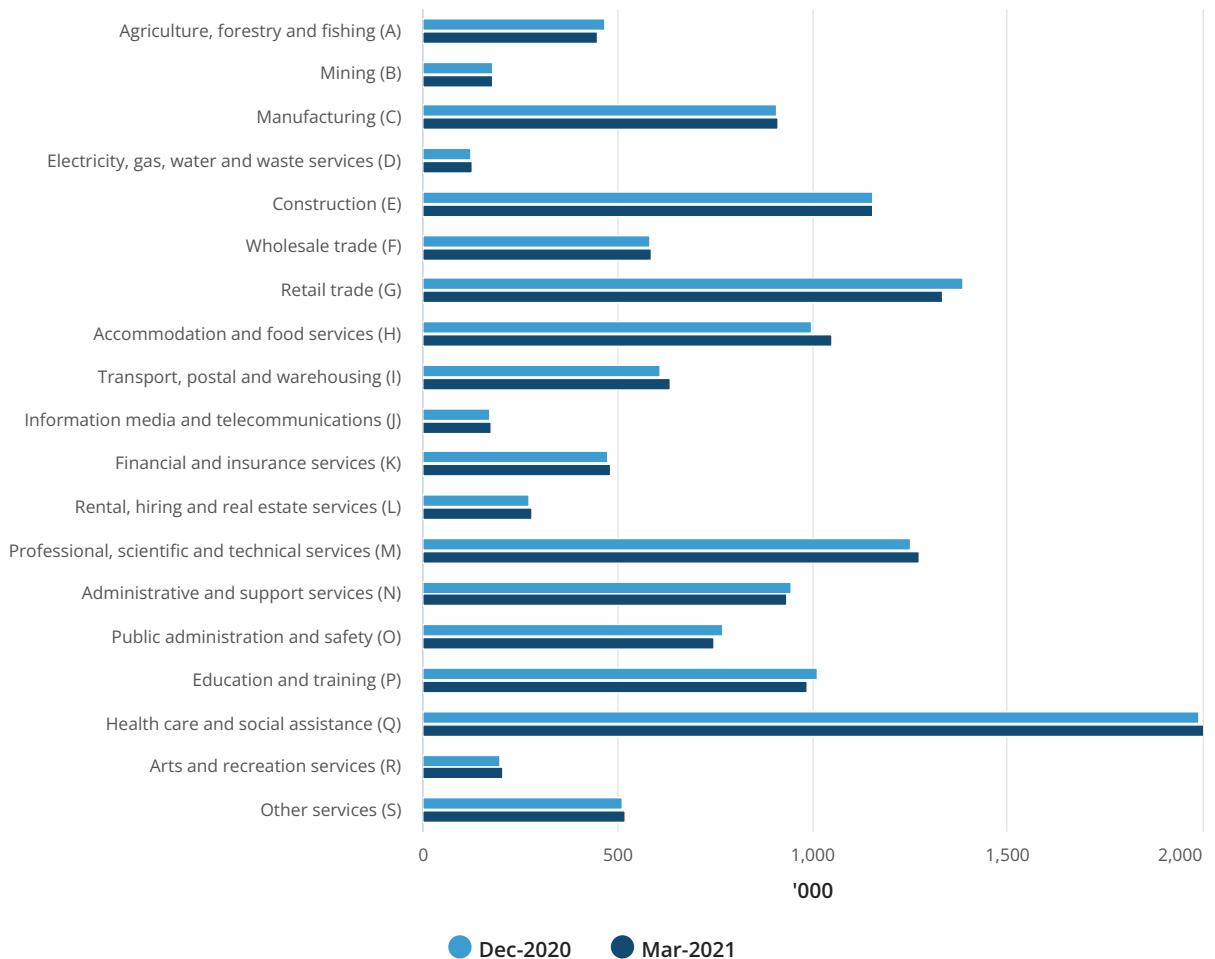
Employed people, Australia, seasonally adjusted



The Australian Labour Account produces the number of people employed from an industry perspective. As a result, the sum of employed people in the Australian Labour Account across industry divisions does not equal the total number of people employed in the whole economy, given some people are employed in multiple industries.

The three industries with the highest number of employed people in the March quarter 2021 were Health care and social assistance, Retail trade and Professional, scientific and technical services.

Employed people, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally



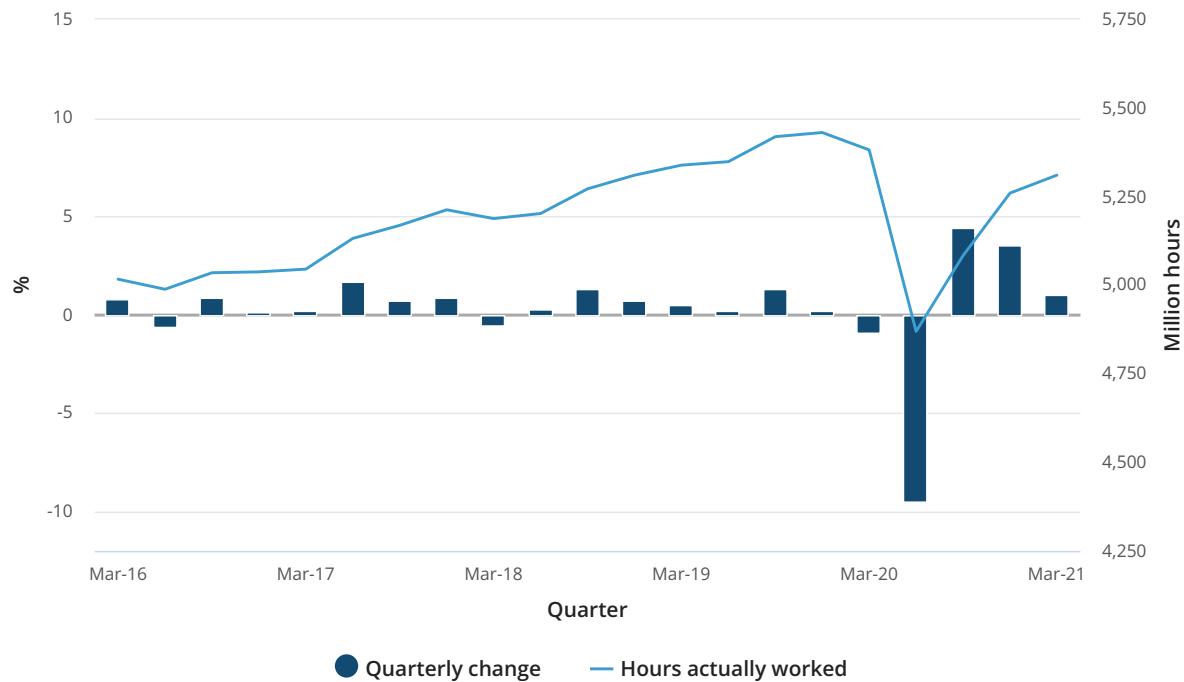
Hours

Hours actually worked is the time spent in a job for the performance of activities that contribute to the production of goods and services during a specified short or long reference period.

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021 the total number of hours actually

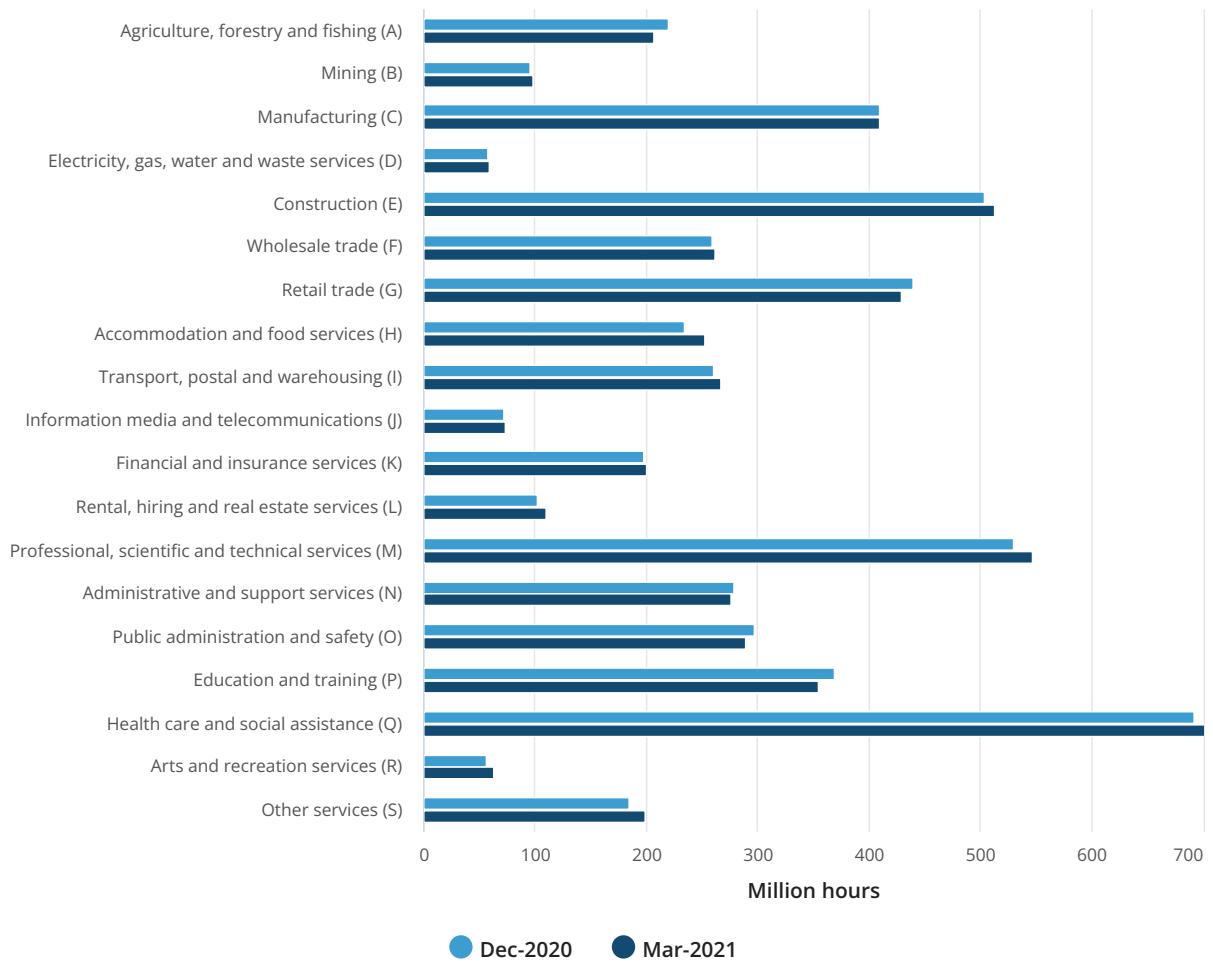
worked increased by 50.7 million hours (or 1.0%) to 5.3 billion hours.

Hours actually worked, Australia, seasonally adjusted



The three industries with the highest number of hours actually worked in the March quarter 2021 were Health care and social assistance, Professional, scientific and technical services and Construction.

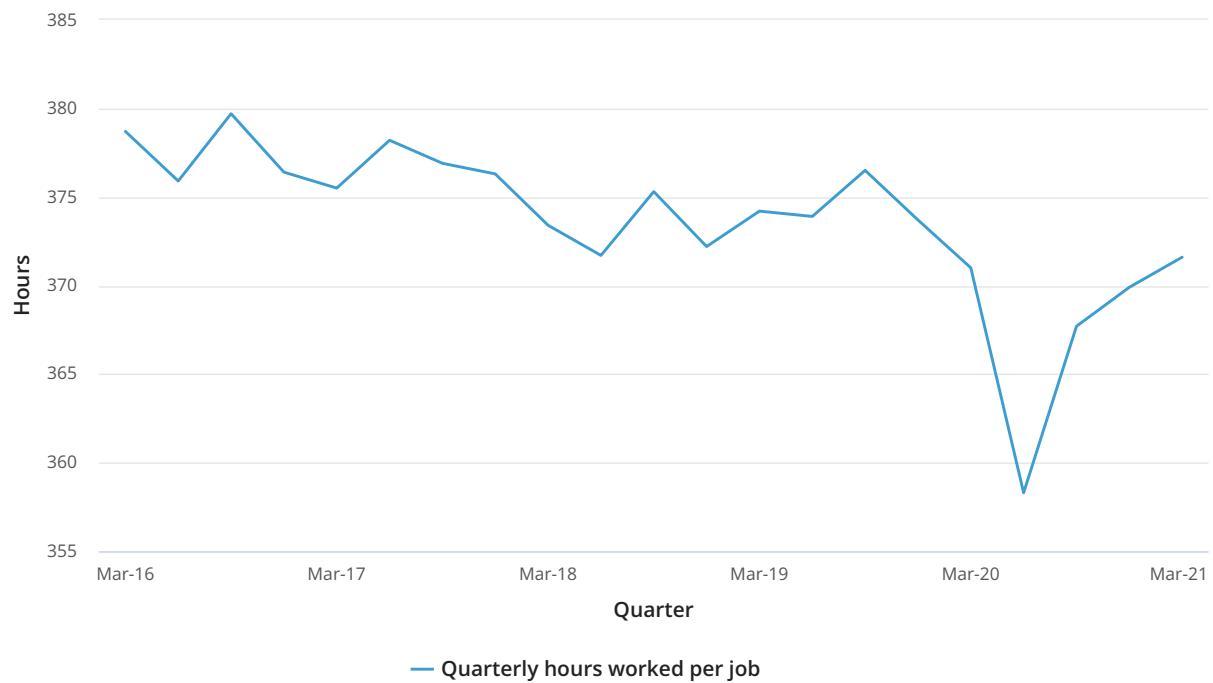
Hours actually worked, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted



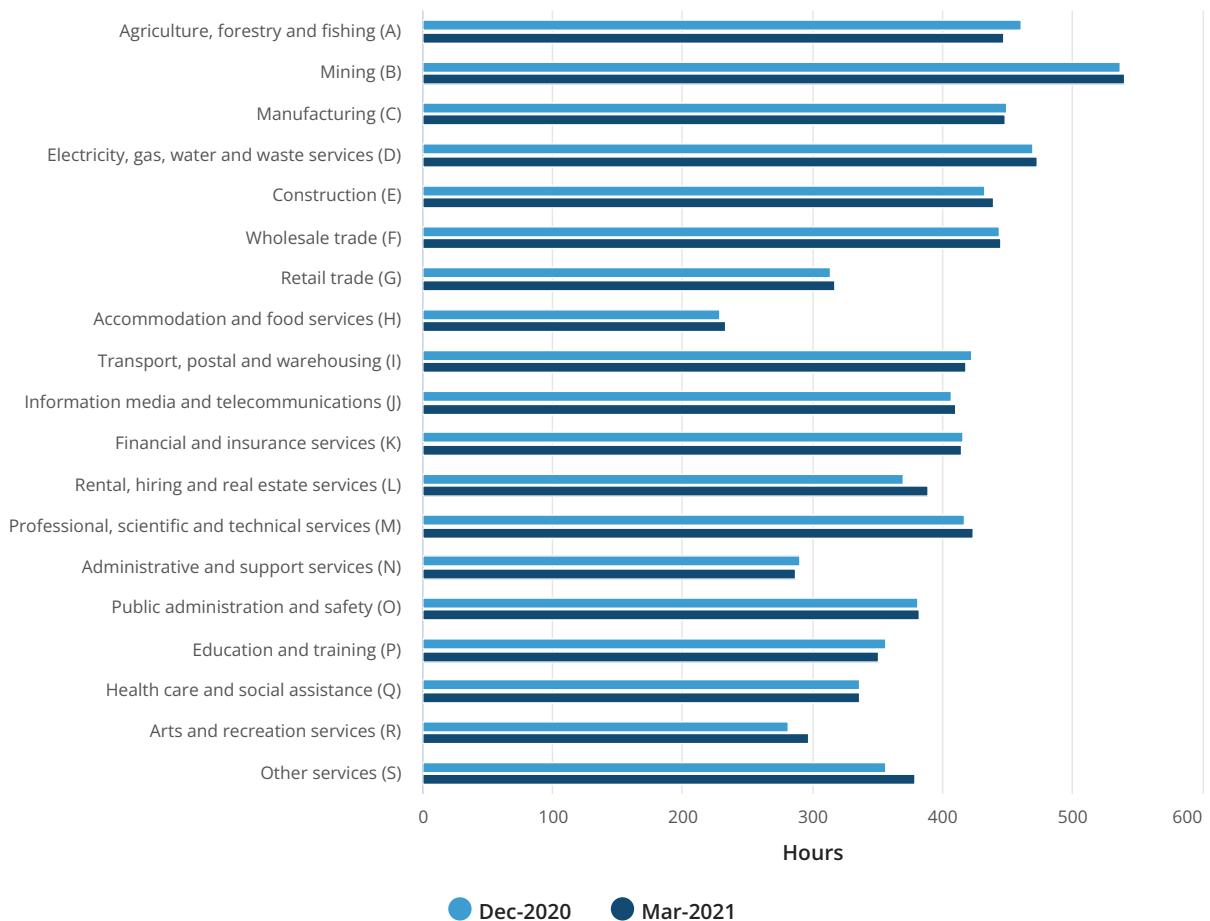
Average hours worked per job is the hours actually worked divided by all filled jobs.

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021 average hours worked per job increased by 0.4% to 372 hours.

Quarterly hours worked per job, Australia, seasonally adjusted



Quarterly hours worked per job, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted



Payments

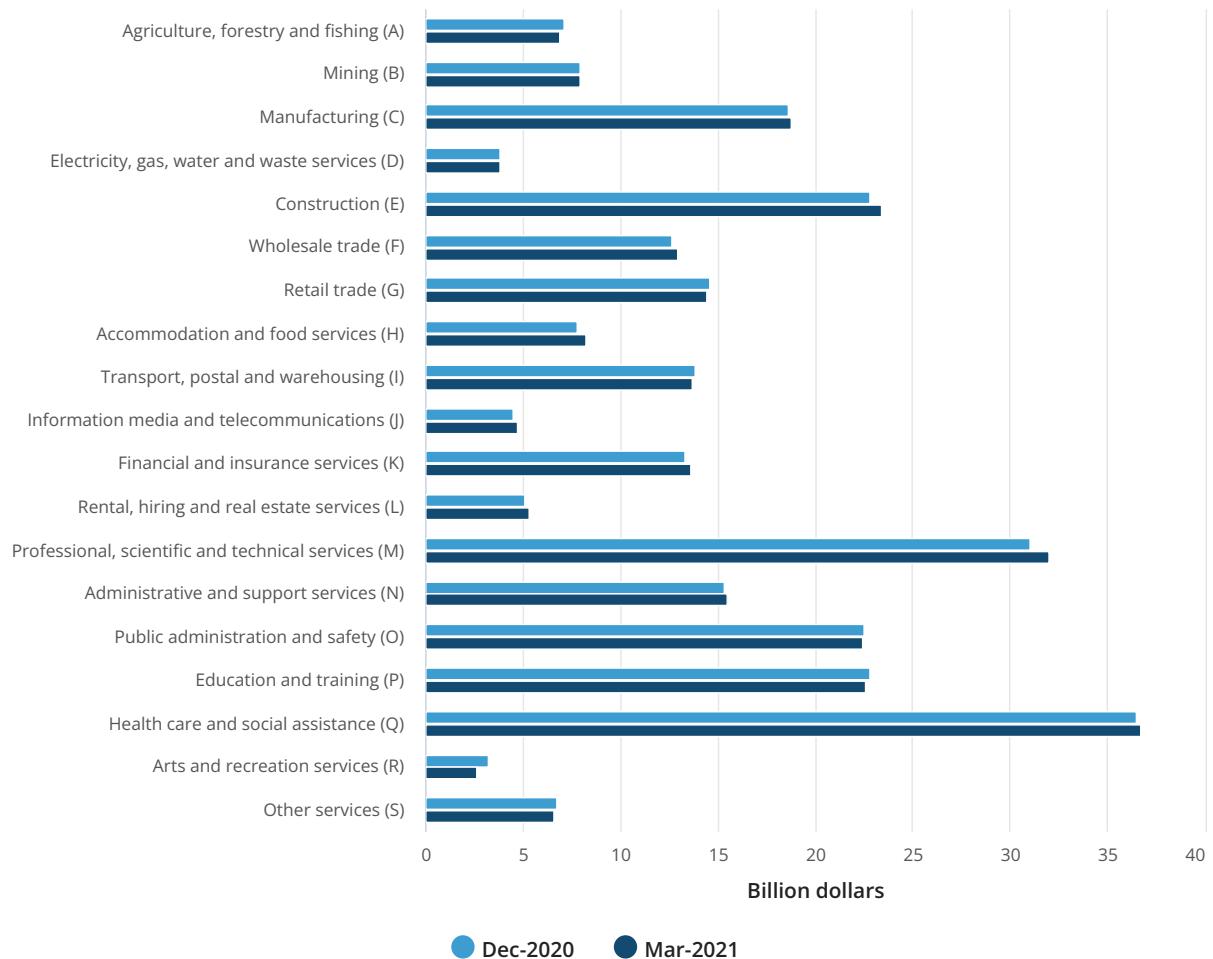
The Labour Account Payments quadrant presents the costs incurred by enterprises in employing labour, and the incomes received by people from its provision. Total income consists of compensation of employees and labour income from self-employment. The addition of other related costs to employers to total income will derive total labour costs.

In seasonally adjusted terms for the March quarter 2021:

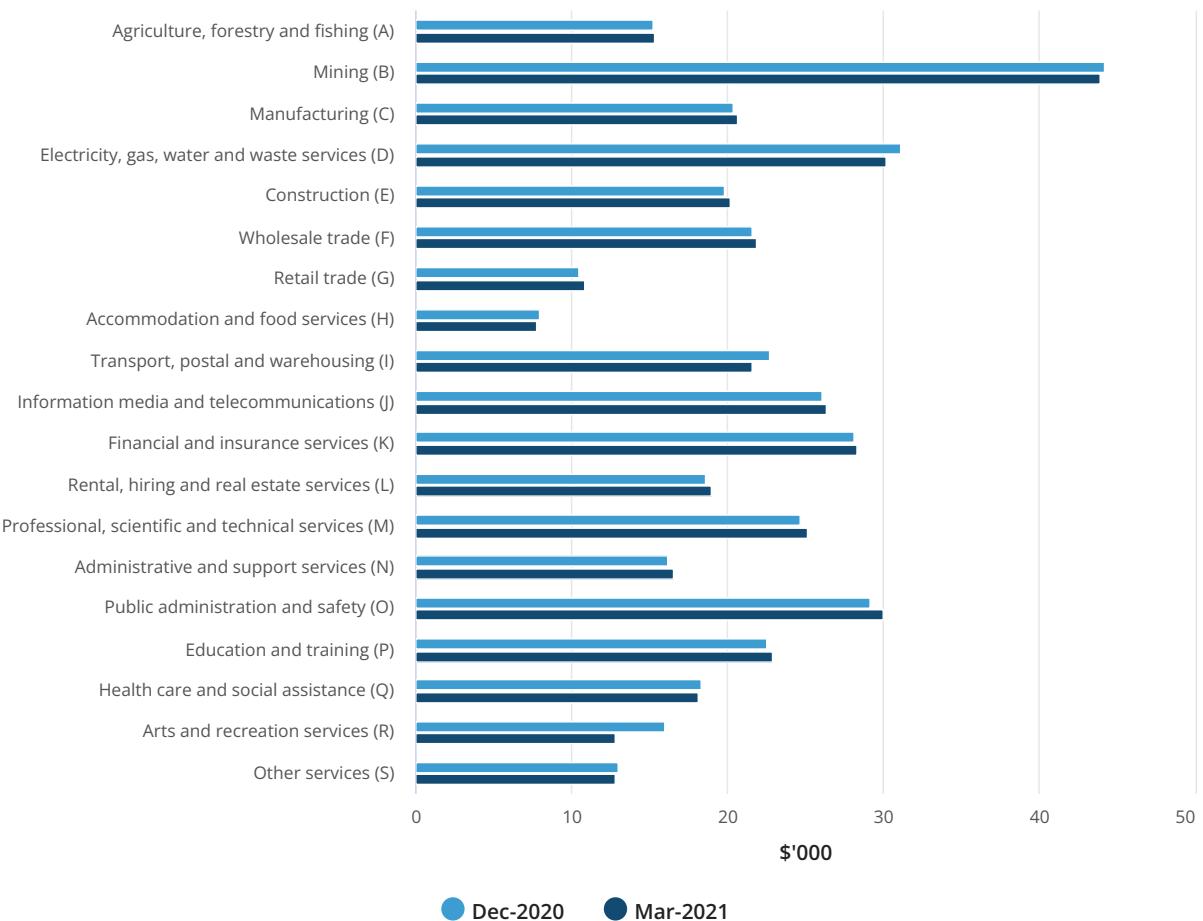
- Total labour income increased by \$2,287 million (or 0.8%) to \$272,081 million.
- The average labour income per employed person increased by 0.2% to \$20,571.
- Total compensation of employees increased by 1.3% to \$247,175 million.
- Labour income from self-employment decreased by 3.6% to \$24,906 million.
- Total labour costs increased by \$9,495 million (3.5%) to \$283,725 million.

The three industries with the highest total labour income in the March quarter 2021 were Health care and social assistance, Professional, scientific and technical services and Construction.

Total labour income, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted



Average income per employed person, by industry, Dec qtr 2020 and Mar qtr 2021, seasonally adjusted



Assessing the impact of COVID-19 and data limitations on the Labour Account

The Labour Account is made up of a variety of data sources that comprise the Labour Account Framework. The decision about each data source was made based on the quality and accuracy of the data when the Labour Account Framework was first established in 2017, and minimal change to the use of data sources has been required over recent years.

The extent of change in the labour market during the COVID-19 period has highlighted some inherent limitations in the use of some data sources in the Labour Account.

Data users should pay particular attention to the following elements of the data:

1. Accounting for the secondary jobs of multiple job holders. This has been based on information from the Linked Employer Employee Dataset (LEED) to determine the industry allocation of multiple job holders. Information from the LEED is currently based on data from 2017-18, and may not fully reflect the extent of change in industry distribution which has occurred as a result of COVID-19.
2. Accounting for non-residents who are in Australia on a short term basis. The June quarter 2020 saw a large reduction in arrivals and departures as a result of the impact of COVID-19, and this low level of arrivals and departures has continued in subsequent quarters. No change has been introduced to the methodology to address the reduction in arrivals and departures resulting from the impact of COVID-19.

For further information on the data sources and methods used in the Labour Account, please refer to the [Australian Labour Account: Concepts Sources and Methods](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6150.0~Oct%202019~Main%20Features~Introduction~1) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/6150.0~Oct%202019~Main%20Features~Introduction~1>).

Further information about the impact of COVID-19 on Labour Account estimates, please refer to the [June quarter 2020 release \(/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-account-australia/jun-2020#assessing-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-labour-account\)](#) of the Labour Account publication.

Data downloads

Labour Account Australia, Upcoming changes to spreadsheet names

[!\[\]\(66568c3ce22862f5aa9927d764d3a113_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[104 KB]

Time series spreadsheets

[!\[\]\(5db460c3746afb1ce6e75bddb304caae_img.jpg\) Download all \(11.35 MB\)](#)

Table 1. Total all industries - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(05ebac037cc6375f048d1fb0bccffd53_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.84 MB]

Table 2. Agriculture, forestry and fishing (A) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(0c726fb5109fcf7799a12141a3e5483d_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 3. Mining (B) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(0d6a6f00060aaf300973bf619c8b7212_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 4. Manufacturing (C) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(ef62519991500c3a77af2e8766280b93_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 5. Electricity, gas, water and waste services (D) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(45508b8427911c5831891e2446b8470d_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.73 MB]

Table 6. Construction (E) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(0cbaa733e8381d79b89648437341d27b_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 7. Wholesale trade (F) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(23f1ea6e477fa2c36c36829628ca89ec_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 8. Retail trade (G) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(3bae9ad3e379f54a1004e2ee48ae35f1_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 9. Accommodation and food services (H) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(263994d322ae2ba986be478731fe8606_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 10. Transport, postal and warehousing (I) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(12a743ddd08018d30bda7c8d48c9a0fc_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 11. Information media and telecommunications (J) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(e21fc87942c253e1322b4bd0593023dd_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 12. Financial and insurance services (K) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[!\[\]\(f4de481af5661615872dcb2597500a8c_img.jpg\) Download XLS](#)

[2.73 MB]

Table 13. Rental, hiring and real estate services (L) - trend, seasonally adjusted

and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 14. Professional, scientific and technical services (M) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 15. Administrative and support services (N) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 16. Public administration and safety (O) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.73 MB]

Table 17. Education and training (P) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 18. Health care and social assistance (Q) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 19. Arts and recreation services (R) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 20. Other services (S) - trend, seasonally adjusted and original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[2.7 MB]

Table 21. Unbalanced: total all industries - original

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[184 KB]

Table 22. Quarterly revisions

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[5.92 MB]

ABS.Stat datasets

Help for: [ABS.Stat Datasets \(\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/ABSstat+User+Assistance+Material)

[Labour Account Australia, Annual Balanced: Subdivision, Division and Total All Industries \(\)](http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_LABOUR_ACCT)

[Labour Account Australia, Annual Unbalanced: Total All Industries \(\)](http://stat.data.abs.gov.au/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=ABS_LBR_ACCT_UNBAL)

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6150.0.55.003.

Post-release changes

18/6/2021

- Added additional information to the 'Data impacts and changes' section on the contribution of short-term non-residents in the Labour Account, and on comparisons with Labour Force Survey estimates
- Combined all the notes on revisions into the 'Data impacts and changes' section

Methodology

[Labour Account Australia methodology, March 2021](#)